

February 13, 2013



Chair Roblan, members of the committee,

My name is Mike Russell, I can be reached at 3050 N. Delta Highway Eugene, OR 97408 and I am the Lane County Parks Manager and am here to represent the Lane County Parks Division. Lane County Parks supports the proposed legislative measure, Senate Bill 331.

Lane County Parks manages and maintains 71 recreational sites throughout Lane County, totaling more than 4600 acres. Perhaps our most popular outdoor recreational opportunity is camping. Lane County Parks provides 222 campsites that provide close-to-home camping, coastal activities, lake swimming and water sports, river activities, and sporting events. More than 18,000 nights are camped in our campgrounds and half a million visitors visit a Lane County Park each year. Our parks have frequent and often use, provide valued and needed services, and are an important asset to Lane County citizens and visitors. The Oregon Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) notes that the top activity for individuals ages 55-74 is RV/trailer camping and notes that camping in tents was the most preferred youth program activity across all age groups. Investing in a statewide park campground system that provides these most sought after services, regardless of the jurisdictional owner, is an equitable investment to support the need of Oregon residents and our visitors. This bill will provide increased maintenance and improvement opportunities to each public campground throughout the state and provide additional opportunities for development of future campground improvements.

Lane County Parks plays an active role in delivering outdoor recreation facilities that, for many rural communities, are not available by any other provider. These facilities add to the overall strength of rural communities and provide opportunity for active outdoor recreation. Parks provide critical services and opportunities that increase overall health, improve quality of life, and strengthen economies. Our parks offer local and affordable camping experiences to all.

Counties throughout the state are struggling to balance their budgets and provide even the basic level of services needed and Lane County is no different. Providing recreational opportunities at an affordable price is crucial to making these services available. Lane County Parks has worked diligently to be self-sufficient to provide these affordable services, while at the same time contributing toward the overall county budgeting approach by not relying on General Fund monies. Similar to other county park systems in the state; however, Lane County Parks struggles to maintain its current level of service and to maintain its aging infrastructure. With a \$16 million maintenance backlog that continues to grow each year due to lack of funding, the additional revenue that would come to Lane County Parks as a result of this bill would be invaluable and significantly contribute to the goal of providing high quality outdoor recreational opportunities.

I strongly encourage you to support SB 331.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "MRussell", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Mike Russell
Lane County Parks Manager

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Information: www.lanecounty.org/parks Reservations: <http://ecom.lanecounty.org/parks>

COME OUT AND PLAY!!!